

## Updated Paid COVID-19 Leave Policy and Peer Support 04.14.20

Yesterday, Governor Walz issued [Executive Order 20-35](#) extending the COVID-19 peacetime emergency through May 13, 2020 (*Note: this order is separate from the Governor's stay-at-home order effective through May 3, 2020*). Exemptions to the stay-at-home order remain in place for state employees working in Priority 1 and Priority 2 critical services, including DOC employees.

The purpose of this message is to provide you with an update on the State of Minnesota's Paid COVID-19 Leave policy and to make sure you are aware of the DOC's peer support resources.

### Updated Paid COVID-19 Leave Policy

Changes to the Paid COVID-19 Leave policy were announced by Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) last week. The most updated version of the Paid COVID-19 Leave policy clarifies that the paid leave policy remains in place for the duration of the COVID-19 peacetime emergency and further defines the eligible uses for Paid COVID-19 Leave (e.g. School Leave, Health Leave, Care Leave and Distance Leave). Please review the attached updated policy or check it out on [MMB's website](#).

The DOC's process for receiving and reviewing Paid COVID-19 Leave requests has been updated to reflect the realities many of our employees are facing. The process is simple and outlined here:

- 1) **Initial Request for Paid COVID-19 Leave**. If you think you are eligible for and in need of Paid COVID-19 Leave relief, then you should *submit the Paid COVID-19 Leave request form to your local HR representative*. If you are determined eligible, then you will be provided short-term Paid COVID-19 Leave in order to resolve your personal situation or secure other care arrangements for your loved ones so that you can return to work. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria for Paid COVID-19 Leave, then your local HR representative will work with you to pursue other types of leave (e.g. FMLA) that might be available to you.
- 2) **Request for Appeal of Paid COVID-19 Leave**. We recognize that some of you are facing unique challenges because of COVID-19 and want to help manage our agency's role as a critical public service with your need to manage your personal responsibilities through this crisis. Toward that end, we have established a process to review requests for appeal on a case-by-case basis. In order to request an appeal of your Paid COVID-19 Leave, please send your initial request form and justification of your need for reconsideration to [covid.leave.appeal@state.mn.us](mailto:covid.leave.appeal@state.mn.us).

### Peer Support

The DOC invested in an internal peer support team this past year to help connect our staff with colleagues who understand the stress, anxiety and frustration of corrections work. While this team's ability to be mobile and travel to facilities and field offices is limited due to COVID-19, they continue to actively support many of our colleagues. If you're feeling the need to make a connection, I urge you to reach out to Lydia Newlin or Shawn Yurick by calling 651.361.7110 or emailing [peersupportunit.doc@state.mn.us](mailto:peersupportunit.doc@state.mn.us). This resource is completely confidential.

Thank you so much for your continued commitment to public service in the midst of this crisis. Stay safe, and stay healthy.

**Marcus Schmit**

Assistant Commissioner, Operations Support Division